

## BCU Three Star Sea Kayak - Guidance Notes

### Aim

To recognise the level of skill, understanding, and knowledge demonstrated (whilst journeying in a moderate tidal environment as part of a led group with winds no more than Force 4) is of the standard of an able improving sea paddler and beyond that of the beginner.

**The nature of the assessment is that of continuous evaluation throughout a suitable day journey.**

BCU Three Star Sea standard is the appropriate level of performance for paddlers to begin working towards the BCU Four Star Sea Leader Award.

### Equipment

The candidate must have personal equipment, appropriate for a competent member of a group undertaking a day's journey on the sea, including;

- A closed cockpit kayak or sit-on-top suitable for sea touring
- Appropriate personal clothing (this may include a helmet)
- Spare clothing
- Food and drink
- A means of summoning external assistance and awareness of its limitations
- Towline
- Knife
- Whistle
- Basic first aid kit
- Basic repair kit
- Exposure bag or emergency shelter

### Part A - Personal paddling skills

The candidate will demonstrate their ability to skilfully control their kayak in the prescribed conditions through blending their body, boat, and blade positions. This will incorporate the application of the various practical techniques listed below. The paddler should keep their actions within the "safety Box" and perform strokes on both sides.

If the kayak is fitted with a rudder, it must be disabled for the duration of the assessment. It is required that boats should be fitted with total buoyancy (e.g. watertight compartments/airbags)

**A1. Lifting and carrying, launching and landing**

Demonstrate good, safe lifting and carrying techniques appropriate to moving a kayak from a vehicle to the launch site, using teamwork where necessary to limit the risk of accident and injury. The candidate should be able to launch safely and efficiently from any simple launch site with the boat afloat (e.g. pier, steps, rocky shoreline, and beach).

**A2. Efficient forward paddling**

Effective range of forward paddling technique including;

- Good trunk rotation, high paddling action with reasonably extended front arm. Good catch and power phase with early exit of the blade.
- Awareness of lower limb cycling action and push and pull ratio of the arms. The candidate will be observed throughout the test and should show good style at cruising speed with sufficient power in the stroke to paddle against wind

**A3. Reverse paddling, stopping**

Accurate and efficient reverse paddling utilising coastal features and other kayakers.

Stopping - forwards and reverse; from cruising speed stopping in a controlled manner within a minimum number of strokes.

**A4. Maintaining Direction;**

**Edging** - If the candidate is participating in a sea kayak they should show effective edging strategies to control the kayak whilst travelling both forwards and reverse.

**Stern Rudder** - The paddle blade should be placed in the water, towards the stern. The candidate should be able to keep the kayak running straight, with the paddle kept on one side of the kayak whilst maintaining speed e.g. used to run through a narrow gap.

**A5. Changing Direction;**

Turning the kayak 360 degrees in both directions by using alternate forward and reverse sweep strokes, in conjunction with edging to assist this manoeuvre. Paddle blade covered, reaching out to full arm extension, elbow slightly bent.

**Turning whilst on the move** - Turning the kayak through 90 degrees using combinations of both inside and outside edge, and vertical and horizontal paddle positions to avoid obstacles (e.g. sweep, low brace turn, bow rudder).

*Training note; for vertical paddle strokes 90 degrees may be difficult to achieve the importance is that the turn is initiated with a vertical paddle stroke.*

**A6. Moving Sideways, both static and on the move**

An efficient sideways movement must be evident without the kayak turning, using a variety of techniques. Body well rotated, paddle shaft upright, blade submerged.

**A7. Supporting**

High and low recovery strokes to be performed with the kayak well off balance; also to be performed on the move, and forward paddling to be resumed thereafter.

**A8. Rolling on flat water**

An effective Roll to be performed, on one side only, following a full capsized. Failed attempts do not disqualify the candidate; however, a successful roll must be seen. Sit-on-top paddlers to perform self-rescue instead, getting back on to the sit-on-top unaided.

**A9. Securing**

Secure the kayak to a trailer; kayak rack or roof rack using straps or rope. Any system is acceptable, but if rope is used it must be an efficient recognised knot.

### Part B - Safety and Rescue:

**B1. Deep-water rescue**

Perform a safe and timely deep-water rescue of a capsized kayaker, use of appropriate dialogue with the person whilst maintaining control of the rescue.

Capsize the kayak, and then following the directions of an able rescuer demonstrate an ability to re-occupy their rescued kayak.

**B2. Contact Tows and use of towline**

Candidate must demonstrate a push or pull contact tow. The candidate will also demonstrate a simple tow using a towline and demonstrate an emergency release. The candidate must indicate that they are aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

**B3. Eskimo Rescue (Self-rescue for sit-on-top paddlers)**

Candidate to act as both rescuer and victim. Both kayak and paddle presentation must be demonstrated. The rescuer is expected to move in from a realistic distance. A first time recovery must follow, but two attempts may be made; the rescuer must approach from a safe angle at a sensible speed. The rescuer should not approach from right angles to where the hands and body are located.

Sit-on-top paddlers to perform self-rescue instead, getting back on to the sit-on-top unaided.

**Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills:****C.1 Personal risk management****C.2 Awareness of others**

Training needs to ensure that students have the experience and judgement required to safely operate as a group member in moderate sea conditions. They should practise identifying hazards and choosing suitable routes, i.e. a safe route around rocks. They should understand the use of suitable equipment for a day journey, including equipment to look after themselves (i.e. Sun hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, fluid intake, snacks, and warm clothes). They must demonstrate good group etiquette i.e. staying together, whilst also giving other group members enough space. Students should understand and be aware of the importance of what is happening to them and others around them. They do not need to be responsible for others but they should work together and help each other through appropriate communication techniques.

**C.3 Paddle as part of a led group**

Through training it is important the candidates experience a range of moderate water conditions. For example; Bays, harbours, beaches, estuaries, stretches of coastline in close proximity to the shore with easy landing, all with winds not above force 4. Also including launching and landing through moderate surf (3 feet maximum). (The moderate water definition does not include fast tidal streams, tidal races, or overfalls)

Candidates should also be involved in the trip planning, and understand the importance of map/chart work and strategies for keeping together in a range of conditions.

At assessment candidates are required to show they have the experience and judgement required to safely operate as a group (of similar standard paddlers), in moderate sea conditions. They should show ability in identifying hazards and choosing suitable routes. As a group, they should carry suitable equipment for a day journey and have 'etiquette'. Awareness is important here, both of what is happening to them and others around them. They do not need to be responsible for others but they should work together and help each other through communication. The nature of the assessment is that of continuous evaluation throughout a suitable day journey, experiencing Moderate Tidal Conditions.

**Part D – Theory:****D1. Equipment**

See section on page 1, and notes in section C1 and C2.

### **D2. Sea Safety**

Be aware of safety precautions applying particularly to kayaking on the sea  
For Example;

- The general effects of wind (particularly offshore), swell, tide and geographical feature
- National Coastguard organisations and rescue services
- Potential hazards (environmental and other water users)

### **D3. Weather**

Have knowledge of the various sources of appropriate weather forecasts and how to interpret these in terms of a proposed day's journey.

### **D4. Hypothermia / First Aid**

Have a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of hypothermia. The possession of a first aid certificate is recommended but the ability to help with basic first aid issues is essential.

### **D.5 Access**

Be aware of regional and national access issues and legislation as well as our basic freedom to paddle on the sea. Be aware that some harbour authorities have the right to charge kayakers, and do so.

### **D6. Environment**

Anyone operating within sensitive environments has a responsibility to the environment and wildlife. Consequently, the candidate should be mindful of the local wildlife, its habitats, and preservation. They must also have knowledge of, and abide by, relevant codes of practice.

### **D7. Planning**

Be able to identify basic coastal features using a map and chart, and have the ability to interpret tide tables and use tidal constants.

### **D8. Group Awareness**

See notes in section C1 and C2.

### **D9. General Knowledge**

Candidates should have an awareness of the diverse nature of paddlesport and the rich history paddling has, within both Sea Paddling and the other disciplines.

### **D10. Navigation**

Candidates should be able to;

- show basic recognition of main buoyage
- show basic knowledge of collision regulations and sound signals
- identify position by using a grid reference and a latitude and longitude
- use a compass to paddle on a bearing
- calculate distance and paddling time